

# THE MARGARET EATON SCHOOL

## Programme

Monday, March 22nd, 1926

### 1. "ANTIGONE"

a pantomime, by Effie McQueen and Ruth Tanton, based on the tragedy of Sophocles.

Ismene	-	-	-	-	-	Enid Kelghley
Antigone	-	-	-	-	-	Effie McQueen
Creon	-	-	-	-	-	Ruth Tanton
Messenger	-	-	-	-	-	Kathleen Wolfe
Haemon	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Cruickshank
Soothsayer	-	-	-	-	-	Hope Holmested
Eurydice	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Silverthorn

At the piano, Olive Smith

### 2. A Recitation

written by Hope Holmested and given by Enid Kelghley.

### 3. "THE BLOOD ON BOBBY'S HEAD"

a melodramatic interlude by the playing cast.

An Attendant	-	-	-	-	-	Kathleen Wolfe
Bobby	-	-	-	-	-	Katherine Coate
Janet	-	-	-	-	-	Nora Hope
Apaches	-	-	-	-	-	Gwendolyn Irish
A Policeman	-	-	-	-	-	Hilma Farquharson
						Muriel Lewis

### 4. "We all Love a Pretty Girl Under the Rose"—Dr. Arne.

Sung by Kathleen Wolfe and interpreted by Jane Hinds and Evelyn Beahan.

### 5. A Scene from a Play, "The Great God Nurn"

written and acted by Nathalie Alfsen.

### 6. "THE SCIENTIFIC AGE"

A study in Expressionism in the style of the new Russian Theatre by the playing cast.

A Doctor	-	-	-	-	-	Enid Kelghley
An Assistant	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Cruickshank
1st Peasant	-	-	-	-	-	Effie McQueen
2nd Peasant	-	-	-	-	-	Emma Casey
3rd Peasant	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Silverthorn
A Mother	-	-	-	-	-	Nora Hope
A Child	-	-	-	-	-	Gwendolyn Irish
A Bride	-	-	-	-	-	Ruth Tanton
A Bridegroom	-	-	-	-	-	Hope Holmested

Peasants, Bridesmaids, etc.

The scene is laid in a clinic in the year 1950.

### 7. "THE CHARLADY'S LAMENT"

written and acted by Lillian Melville.

### 8. DANSE DES FLEURS

created and danced by Gwendolyn Irish.

### 9. "THE TRUST OF THE WHITE RACE"

a play by Hope Holmested.

The Redskin	-	-	-	-	-	Effie McQueen
The Squaw	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Silverthorn
Child of To-day	-	-	-	-	-	Ruth Tanton
Spirit of the North Wind	-	-	-	-	-	Kathleen Wolfe
Spirit of the Trees	-	-	-	-	-	Hope Holmested
Spirit of the Lakes and Streams	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Cruickshank
Spirit of the Land of To-morrow	-	-	-	-	-	Enid Kelghley

### 10. Oscar Wilde's "BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA"

a pantomime by the cast.

A Herald	-	-	-	-	-	Gwendolen Curry
A Lord Chamberlain	-	-	-	-	-	Frances Tolhurst
A Lady in Waiting	-	-	-	-	-	Janet Mallett
The Infanta	-	-	-	-	-	Fanny Lyons
A Spanish Dancer	-	-	-	-	-	Jane Hinds
A Toreador	-	-	-	-	-	Winifred Fax
A Jester	-	-	-	-	-	Margaret Robertson
A Fantastick	-	-	-	-	-	Evelyn Beahan

### 11. "LE NEZ RETROUSSÉ"

a pantomime by the interpreters.

The Lady Who Possesses It	-	-	-	-	-	Gwendolyn Irish
The Man Who Objects To It	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Cruickshank

### 12. A Monologue

by Betty Hinds.

### 13. "THE SEVEN AGES OF MAN"

a pantomime by Enid Kelghley.

Shakespeare	-	-	-	-	-	Nora Hope
A Mother	-	-	-	-	-	Nathalie Alfsen
A Boy	-	-	-	-	-	Gwendolyn Irish
A Lover	-	-	-	-	-	Enid Kelghley
His Lady	-	-	-	-	-	Effie McQueen
A Soldier	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Cruickshank
A Victim	-	-	-	-	-	Ruth Tanton
A Justice	-	-	-	-	-	Hope Holmested
A Pantaloon	-	-	-	-	-	Myra Silverthorn
Second Childhood	-	-	-	-	-	Olive Smith



## SEASON 1925-26

THE Theatre of The Margaret Eaton School will open its first season the week of October 5th, with a production of George Bernard Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra," the cast to include Florence McGee as Cleopatra, Frances Rostance as Ftatateeta, Ivor Lewis as Caesar, and H. E. Hitchman as Pothinus.

This and the five other regular productions to be given in the course of the season will be open to both subscribers and non-subscribers, on the terms set out below :

### *Subscribers :*

Single seats for the six productions, \$5.

### *Non-Subscribers :*

Single seats for each production, \$1 or 75c, according to location.

For Monday evening performances, all seats 50c.

### *The dates and the productions follow :*

October 5-10—"Caesar and Cleopatra," by George Bernard Shaw.

November 16-21—"The Little Man," by John Galsworthy, and "Love of One's Neighbor," by Leonid Andreyev.

December 28-January 2—"The Shepherdess Without a Heart," by Bertram Forsyth. (Music by Franklin Harvey.)

February 1-6—"She Stoops to Conquer," by Oliver Goldsmith.

March 15-20—"Beggar on Horseback," by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly.

April 26-May 1—"Bastien et Bastienne," by Mozart, and "L'Allegro," by Handel.

An extra production, "The Cherry Orchard," by Anton Tchekov, will be presented free to subscribers at a date to be announced later.

In addition to the above, plays will be presented from time to time by pupils of The Margaret Eaton School, to which subscribers will be invited.

Applications for subscriptions should be made on the enclosed form to The Secretary-Treasurer, The Theatre of The Margaret Eaton School, and all cheques and money orders should be made payable to the Theatre.

The Box Office Telephone Number is Randolph 4544.



# The Margaret Eaton School

Bertram Forsyth

requests the pleasure of your company

at an

Informal Recital of Original Work

by the

Students of the Department of Literature and  
Dramatic Art, on

Monday, March Twenty-Second

at Eight-Thirty p.m.

in the New Hall of

The Margaret Eaton School,

Corner Yonge and McGill Streets,

KINDLY BRING THIS PROGRAMME WITH YOU



At the Margaret Eaton Dectie,  
 Perry 6 - it is Bertam Forsyth  
 in Christmas show, "The Shepherdess  
 without a heart". I didn't see it, but  
 his Butler's review follows: -

## LOVELY FANTASIA IS FORSYTH PRODUCTION

Christmas Play at Margaret  
 Eaton Hall is Extravanza  
 of Delicate Color

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

Into a land that may be called ex-  
 travaganza, went the forty  
 folk who performed and the folk who  
 saw the Christmas play "The Shep-  
 herdess Without a Heart," by Bert-  
 ram Forsyth, at the new hall of the  
 Margaret Eaton School last night. No  
 play quite so inordinately and daint-  
 ily fantastic to such a length has  
 been done here in at least many  
 years. The customary personifica-  
 tion of toys and birds and animals is  
 here carried to far more extravagant  
 heights - even up to the roofs of the  
 houses in old London.

The central idea of the play seems  
 to be the glorification of dream and  
 the immensity of love. Anyway, in

the toy shop of Kaspar Peterkin toys  
 and people are at first mixed up in  
 the story which at first concerns the  
 threat of old Simon, a sort of super-  
 Scrooge, to evict the Peterkin family,  
 including three grandchildren, for  
 rent on Christmas Day; afterwards a  
 dialogue and ballet of the toys; then  
 the world outside into which the bit  
 of Dresden china known as the  
 shepherdess and the chimney sweep  
 and the cuckoo and the toy soldiers  
 all go in search of phenomena. And  
 in this series of musical and spoken  
 tableaux on the snowy roofs occurs  
 the same dream to several people,  
 three of whom are the grandchildren,  
 another old Simon who cursed the  
 black cats and the Christmas carol-  
 lers, and a quartet of grandiloquent-  
 ly stupid-looking storks.

Beautiful tableaux and pantomimes  
 and ballets recur and re ur, carols  
 are sung behind stage - real ones;  
 with some of the proper discord of  
 waits, lovely incidental ensembles are  
 played by a little floor orchestra of  
 strings and a few woodwinds; the  
 flute does exquisite melodies over the  
 roofs, there are enchanted color  
 effects and cold impersonal fantasies

In snow that is never real but only  
 white; and there is so much fairy  
 and fable and Christmas atmosphere  
 that every now and then one longs for  
 some one to crack a real joke or make  
 a terrible noise just to be human.

The piece is uncommonly clever  
 and illustrates the use of the ima-  
 gination with stage technique in a  
 high degree by means of a very plas-  
 tic method. It is particularly well  
 done, but is half an hour too long. By  
 all odds the most atmospheric "pan-  
 tomime" so far this season.

Dec 25 - Jan 21, 1925

from M. Johnson's diaries

V. 21, 1925

CANADIAN HIST. DEPT. P71B3

See p 175 On the matter of orchestra location, mentioned in  
 my review of "Rose and ring", Bridle has the -

The After-thought Orchestra  
 The orchestra has become a prob-  
 lem at both Hart House and the New  
 Hall. In the former it used to play in  
 a room at the left wing; now it plays  
 on the floor to the right at a very  
 awkward angle for cues and tempos.  
 There can never be an orchestra pit  
 in front of the stage because there  
 are waterpipes just underneath that  
 must not be disturbed. A similar  
 problem befalls the New Hall in the  
 swimming tank that comes directly

below the stage. In The Shepherdess  
 the orchestra had to be placed on the  
 floor behind a very ugly screen over  
 which one furtively watches the arms  
 of the conductor in moving silhouette.  
 This is a poor makeshift and badly  
 breaks up the auditorium. It would  
 be better to have a smaller orchestra  
 screened off in the front of the gal-  
 lery.

The same trouble used to happen in  
 building churches; the choir and the  
 organ occupied the place known as  
 "Leavings," if any.

C. R. R. Hart House, Dec.



3.26

**Beggar on Horseback**  
**At Margaret Eaton****Interesting Experimental Play**  
**This Week Under Bertram**  
**Forsythe's Direction**

The Margaret Eaton school deserves thanks and congratulations for giving "Beggar on Horseback" this week. It is an important modern American play and gives the public an opportunity of seeing contemporary dramatic technique reflecting the jazz era.

There is a deliberate confusion throughout the play, a mingling of themes and different conversations going on at the same time, the last detail taken probably from the Moscow Art Theatre's methods.

This Kaufman and Connelly comedy

uses more or less "futuristic" means of expression, but the striking effect is lessened somewhat because the whole thing is supposed to be a dream where incoherence is natural.

There are plays being written, both in the United States and in mid-Europe, where this compromise of a dream is abandoned and a mixed, chaotic condition, reflecting the tentative civilization of to-day, is depicted without reservation. Among plays of this kind are Lawlor's American "Processional" and, in method if not in subject matter, Werfel's "Goat Song," the recent production of the Theatre Guild in New York, where Madeleine Galbraith and Lorna Maclean, Toronto girls, had parts.

"Beggar on Horseback" is excellently produced at the Margaret Eaton school and is another feather in the cap of its director, Bertram Forsyth.

STAR

Main Johnson

(from his diaries  
U.23, 1926?)

CANADIAN HISTORY DEPT.

MTLB



Sunday, March 15, 1926

STAR 15.3.26

Program etc  
in p 107 pp

This evening we saw "Beggars on Horseback" at the Margaret Eaton. I put this picture in the Star of Pearl Gray, leading lady: -



from M. Johnson's  
diaries (Can. Hist.)

Le Telegraphe comment: -

V. 23, 1926

Can. History Dept. m72B

### A Dream-Comedy

Although the most notable part of Beggars on Horseback, the Margaret Eaton Theatre presentation last week, was Bertram Forsyth's interpolated pantomime, A Kiss in Xanadu, the play itself is cleverly conceived and constructed and was splendidly presented. A Kiss in Xanadu is a very dainty and graceful little poem in pantomime. It is the kind of delightful fancy that sets one thinking. One wondered if it would have been better had it been more elaborate—and then how much elaboration would have marred it. It can be suggested that it might have been improved by setting it entirely instead of only partially in black and white.

Beggars on Horseback is a dream-comedy, very elaborately constructed, but never seemed labored. The stagecraft in it is splendid—the

sudden grotesqueries, and the incisive touches of character by the players made it an intellectual delight. For instance, the hero in his dream, stabs his fiancée, her aggressive father, her gushing mother and her surly brother, with a paper knife. They sing slowly and serenely to the floor—and our hero is at once besieged by an army of reporters, anxious for a first-hand story. Almost immediately after this the audience is started by a raucous shout of "Extry!" and ushers rush down the aisles distributing a crazy dream-newspaper. The absurd cleverness of the play is brought out with keen skill by Mr. Forsyth and his players.

H. E. Hitchman plays Cady Senior, whom one would imagine a blustering, self-assertive money grubber, as a fussy punctuous but rather likable old chap; and he leaves no room to

doubt that he is right. George Young and Donald Blackwell as Homer Cady, the hypochondriac son and Jerry the elevator boy, respectively, play with a splendid insight; these two youngsters have noteworthy talent. So has Pearl Gray, delightful as the flapper fiancée. All the parts, indeed, were well done, but these four were extra good. Beggars on Horseback is a wonderful piece of carpentry, but A Kiss in Xanadu is a trifle of sheer art.



16.3.26

SCHOOL  
(BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK)

## Good Fantasy and Satire in "Beggars on Horseback"

Very few American dramatists have shown skill in handling either the art of satire or the art of fantasy. Accordingly, it is a pleasant surprise to find the two of them so well combined in "Beggars on Horseback," the attraction this week at the New Theatre of the Margaret Eaton School. George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly have turned out an amusing dream play with just enough sting in its satiric application to delight those persons who dislike the jazz and efficiency in modern American life. The dramatists borrowed their idea, if we are not mistaken, from a European play, but they applied it to the conditions that exist on this continent, and scored their points with telling effect.

The main character, Neil MacRae, is a young composer, who has to choose between two possible brides, a congenial girl with tastes like his own, and Gladys Cady, the daughter of a millionaire manufacturer. Neil has been urged that the Cady money will enable him to continue with his music, unhindered by the thought of money, and he has just about decided to marry Gladys when he has the dream which forms the body of the play. He dreams that he has married into the Cady family, and that his whole life is dominated by their likes and dislikes. He finds himself living an existence

of jazz. They dance jazz at his wedding and they eat their meals in an environment of jazz. Dozens of servants rush in and out from every direction, and hundreds of friends, as banal as the Cadys themselves, visit their home. Neil cannot think for the clutter of vapid conversation. His father-in-law urges him to write popular music, and insists upon him taking an interest in business. All shout at him in chorus: "Do something for us." The satire on modern business has been especially well handled. Old Cady is the head of the Widget trust, and boasts of the tremendous value of National Widget Week. Business conferences and business conventions are beautifully travestied. Eventually, Neil rebels and murders the entire Cady family, for which he is brought to trial and finds himself in court, presided over by the dominating Cadys. They permit him to present a pantomime of his composition, and the verdict that he has been trying to be a highbrow writer is returned. Accordingly, he is sentenced to life imprisonment in the Cady Art Factory, where authors turn out best selling novels and composers produce popular songs; where artists become famous for doing magazine covers and poets prosper by writing sunshine verse. When Neil wakes from his nightmare, he is glad that he can still marry the wife who will bring him companionship, even though they have no riches.

The fantastic quality of the dream has been remarkably well suggested by the authors. The incidents of his waking hours return in a peculiarly contorted fashion and unexpected incidents

grow out of one another in the strange way that they do. In night-mare "Beggars on Horseback" lends itself to done with simplicity but with good effect in the current presentation. A pliant little interlude is the pantomime "A Kiss in Kanadu," in which a prince and princess wander into the streets at night and enjoy a flirtation together, without mutual recognition. Then they return to the dull routine of domesticity and neither dreams that the other has shared the kiss under the stars. Miss Evelyn Beahan and Miss Florence McGee give a graceful performance in this pantomime. A particularly satisfactory cast has been selected for the fantasy. Mr. George Patton gives an excellent conception of the puzzled, distraught and unhappy composer, married to a brainless flapper and living in a whirl of jazz. Mr. H. E. Hitchman has a congenial role as the golfing business man who rushes at every phone he sees to issue orders to his clerks. No players in town have a surer comedy touch than Mr. George Young and Miss Pearl Gray. The former plays the ingenuous Cady, Jr., and the latter the flapper. The small roles are in capable hands, including Mr. Donald Blackwell and Mr. P. J. Mallett. One is inclined to think that the authors did not give their play a particularly happy title. "Beggars on Horseback" suggests a mean and small man exalted to a position in which his unworthiness is felt, but surely the satire of the comedy is not aimed at that type of man and situation. However, in spite of an unfortunate title, it is a clever piece of work and a very entertaining show. It will appeal to people who like the humorous and the unusual in the theatre.

my review in the Star

## Margaret Eaton

From "She Stoops to Conquer" to "Beggars on Horseback" is a long jump, chronologically and intrinsically, but the Margaret Eaton school proves this week that it can bridge the gap, all the way from Goldsmith's classic, which it put on last month, to Kaufman and Connelly's jazz drama which is the present bill at this theatre.

"Beggars on Horseback" is a purposely confused but penetrating satire on present day life. In theme it is in the same important class as those other American comedies, "Is That So?" and "The Showoff." But where they use the realistic method "Beggars on Horseback" is imaginative, "expressivistic."

The play is too long for its subject matter. To pad it still further, a pantomime is introduced, "A Kiss in Kanadu," which itself is three times too long, making you wait through two mediocre scenes to get the cleverness and charm of the third.

The play proper presents a contrast between art and commercialism. Despite its defects it is creative, marking one of the experimental advances in the theatre of to-day. The local production goes with snap and humor, its action goes with snap all parts of the house as well as on the stage. The jazz theme runs throughout but reaches its climax in a cabaret episode where Pearl Gray and Donald Blackwell, both young people themselves, put over an exceedingly smart and contemporary scene. George Patton and H. E. Hitchman are admirable and in the pantomime Evelyn Beahan and Florence McGee, charming in spite of costumes which are unnecessarily cumbersome. Pearl Gray's costume, on the other hand, both for daytime and evening, were sharply designed and worn vivaciously.

from Main Johnson's diaries

V. 23, 1926?

CANADIAN HISTORY DEPT  
MTLB



71354

MARGARET EATON THEATRE  
THE WILD DUCKFred Jacobs' analysis in the Mail  
1925

Nov. 1925

**Players' Club Opens Season  
With "The Wild Duck"**

More than ten years ago, before the Great War stopped all such activities, the Players' Club gave its first public performance, a presentation of Henrik Ibsen's "Enemy of the People." After the war, for several seasons, the identity of the club became submerged in the activities of the Hart House Theatre until last June, when the members of the executive decided that it was time to resume a separate existence. Again the Players' Club turned to Ibsen for their opening bill, and last night in the New Theatre they made a presentation of "The Wild Duck." Oddly enough, this drama by the great Norwegian, which Europeans consider one of his most actable and interesting pieces, was never used by American producers, so far as we know, until the Players' Theatre staged it with great success in New York last season. It has been done from time to time in London, once with Laurence Irving in the chief male role, and again with Granville Barker, before he turned his attention entirely to producing, in the same part. During the past season a revival in London has enjoyed as much success as that seen in New York.

"The Wild Duck" is usually classed with "The Enemy of the People" because in both these plays Ibsen faced the fact, not altogether willingly, that human nature is a thing with which idealists must reckon. In "The Enemy of the People" he gave a demonstration of the truism that the majority may not always be right, thus illustrating one of the fundamental weaknesses of democracy. In "The Wild Duck" Ibsen recognizes rather sadly that men and women do not always want the truth. They much prefer to have a little illusion in life if it will make them happier. He makes one cynical character say, rather bitterly, that people do not want to be pestered by the claims of the ideal.

The example that the dramatist takes

to illustrate his idea is an extreme one. Gregers Werle knows that his father, the rich merchant, is a crafty and dishonorable man, who has contrived to climb high by exploiting men. Werle ruined his friend, Ekdal, and sent him to prison; then he exploited Ekdal's son, Hjalmar. Among other things, Werle contrived to have Hjalmar marry Werle's mistress in time to save an open scandal. Gregers is an idealist, and after hesitating for several years he returns at last with a determination that all the falsehood surrounding Hjalmar shall be exposed so that he may start life all over again on the firm foundation of truth. His purpose does not work out as he had hoped. When Hjalmar discovers that Gina has deceived him he flies into a highly temperamental mood and declares that he has lost faith in everybody. Gina's daughter, Hedvig, about whose paternity there is now a doubt, adores him, but Hjalmar treats the girl as though she were an outcast. Only when Hedvig commits suicide, as children in Northern Europe seem to do when they feel badly, does Hjalmar come to his senses. The old cynic, Relling, who, after all, sees more clearly than any of the characters, suggests that in less than a year Hjalmar will be consoling himself by spouting about "the child too early torn from her father's heart." There is a stroke of irony near the end when it is suggested that the wicked Werle is contracting a happy second marriage, founded entirely on deceit.

Perhaps the average person will not agree with Ibsen that the meddling Gregers is an apostle of integrity. On this continent we suffer altogether too much from the activities of well-meaning people who insist upon sticking their fingers into other men's business, and who feel justified in making mischief because their motives are idealistic. Gregers belonged to that class. Any sensible man should have seen that it was better to let sleeping dogs lie, especially when such an erratic person as Hjalmar was involved. The average play-goer of to-day may not feel as badly as Ibsen regarding the dangerous quality of truth when used without discretion. Still the subject handled in "The Wild Duck" has a universal interest, and theatrically the play is one of the most effective written by Ibsen. A full account of the acting and the general quality of the performance will be given in The Mail and Empire later in the week.

Hester  
Nov 19**The New Theatre**

The Players Club of Toronto scored their first success of the present season when they presented Ibsen's "The Wild Duck" at the New Theatre last evening. It was the club's first production this winter and they were greeted by an appreciative audience. As a play "The Wild Duck" will always be absorbingly interesting no matter how often one sees it, but it is rather a large order for any group of players to tackle. With six or seven roles calling for dramatic talent of a high order, it cannot be called a light dramatic offering, and in the presentation given last night, the Players' Club maintained its standing in the New theatre movement.

The most difficult role is possibly that of Gregers Werle, to himself an idealist, to everybody else a self-righteous interfering prig. In him, Ibsen parodied the well-meaning, but impractical reformer, and it is the task of the player to so delineate this character that in all this interference in other people's affairs there

is depicted in the reformer's motives nothing but sincerity and truth. Dixon Wagner, who played Gregers Werle, was a little stilted in the opening act, but settled down into his role as the play moved on. The same might be said of George Patton, whose portrayal of Hjalmar Ekdal, became more convincing as the play progressed. Lambert Dussean, as Dr. Relling, was in fine form, and made the best of his part. As a character sketch, however, the work of Ivor Lewis, as Old Ekdal, was almost unequalled.

Agnes Muldrew, as Gina Ekdal, had a very difficult role, but played it very well, as did Elizabeth Mergle, as Mrs. Sorby. Eleanor Barton's portrayal of Hedvig, left nothing to be desired. Pretty as a picture, artless, winsome, she played the photographer's daughter to the life, and there was fine art in her scene with Gregers Werle, when the latter persuaded her to sacrifice her pet wild duck to regain her father's love. When Hedvig, unable to kill the

helpless duck, makes the supreme sacrifice herself, the whole company rose to the dramatic occasion. The final scene between Werle and Dr.

Relling was somewhat lacking, however, and left the effect of an anticlimax. Taken all in all, the production is well staged, and given the elimination of the long, tween-acts pauses, is worth seeing.

Main Johnsons diaries  
V. 21, 1925CANADIAN HISTORY DEPT.  
PTLS



TH 71354

V 29, 1925

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MARGARET EATON SCHOOL  
(CAESAR + CLEOPATRA)Fred Jacob's review, in the Mail & Empire,  
follow:—  
50.10.25**"Caesar and Cleopatra"**  
**Opens the New Theatre**

When the New Theatre opened its doors last night with a revival of George Bernard Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra," a gem of a playhouse was added to the increasing number of local homes of non-professional drama. It was only after a race against the date aimed that the opening was effected, and just a week ago an outsider would have said that the auditorium and stage production as the Shaw play could not possibly be ready in time. But the enthusiasm of those behind the undertaking accomplished what looked to be impossible, and there was a large crowd present last night to see the first effort of the new organization, which, under the combined directorship of Bertram Forsyth and Dixon Wagner, has the advantage of the guidance of the two men who know most about the local development of non-professional talent in recent years. The casting of "Caesar and Cleopatra" indicates their knowledge of "Who's Who" among local players. One may add that the fifty-first opening night will continue to be the policy of the New Theatre of the Margaret Eaton School. There was a

capacity audience last night. There are not a few people who still regard "Caesar and Cleopatra" as the best of the Shaw plays. Certainly, G. B. S. has never written a better or more characteristic entertainment—he even managed to introduce his usual ragging of British respectability by giving Julius Caesar an ancient Briton as a slave. Shaw claims that there is no reason to believe that an Englishman sixty-seven generations back would be any different in his essential character from an Englishman of to-day. In fact, the whole purpose of this historical comedy was to suggest that, though environment and customs and manners may change, human nature remains practically the same through all the ages. He has pictured Julius Caesar as a rather weary world-conqueror, a philosopher, a humorist and in every respect a great man, who finds amusement and relaxation in trying to develop the girlish vixen, Cleopatra, into a woman and a queen. He feels her charm, but he has come to an age when his mind controls his heart. Departing, he leaves a Cleopatra who is maturing into an alluring but dangerous woman. Bernard Shaw has always classed this drama among his "Plays for Puritans" because he has not glorified the amorous lady of the Nile. As he pointed out when he wrote the

play, Shakespeare used all his huge command of rhetoric and stage pathos to give a theatrical sublimity to the wretched and richly deserved end of Antony and Cleopatra, but that, of course, is out of tune with the mind of the Puritan. So he has made his Cleopatra a tantalizing, fleshly and self-centred little animal, without any admirable qualities, and yet altogether fascinating. Personally, we find this son to meet in the theatre than a gorgeous lady of high emotion and blank verse.

This reviewer saw the dress rehearsal of the presentation of "Caesar and Cleopatra" at the New Theatre, but will speak more fully of the acting and the general quality of the performance at a later date. Although the performance at a later date, the general excellence of the cast was apparent, another view of the play, when it is running smoothly against an Egyptian background, will undoubtedly intensify the impression that the new little theatre group has had a most auspicious launching.

With considerable amusement, most of us will recall the controversy that raged around Bernard Shaw when "Caesar and Cleopatra" was first presented in Toronto by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson more than fifteen years ago. On that occasion the play attracted less attention that it deserved because people were so busy denouncing the dramatist for claiming that it was better than Shakespeare. It may be that they had only read the phrase "better than Shakespeare," and without waiting to read the prefaces in which Shaw developed that theme, they jumped at the conclusion that it was an unsupported and unforgivable exhibition of self-satisfaction. Some time before, Shaw had said saucy things about "As You Like It." He considered it a poor play, written by Shakespeare because it was what the public wanted, and thrown at them with a title that conveyed only contempt.

It was a minor blasphemy to say that "As You Like It" was Elizabethan hockney, but it was a major blasphemy to claim to write a better historical drama than Shakespeare. No one seemed to realize in the heat of the battle that Shaw did not say that he was a greater master of the classic form than Shakespeare; he may have laughed at the ease with which blank verse can be written, but it was not comparing himself with the Bard as a poet. He did think, however, that the manner in which Shakespeare glorified the Egyptian wanton was not true to character. He believed that Cleopatra must have been a soulless

creature, with the manners of a queen and the fascination of a witch, but the moral perceptions of her own white cat. A good many persons have since come to the conclusion that, considered humanly, Shaw's Cleopatra is better than Shakespeare's. In fact, he presented these historical characters in a humanized form that made them understandable. Nowadays, we appreciate the achievement and do not cavil at the liberties taken by the dramatist to get his effect. He broke away from dramatic tradition in many respects, and even made them speak in the vernacular of our day by which he indicated that Caesar and Cleopatra doubtless did not realize that they were classic ancients, and probably, when among friends, frequently used the vernacular of their own day.

When Forbes-Robertson brought the play back as part of the repertoire of his farewell tour, the prejudice had disappeared, and people crowded the theatre to see one of the most remarkable dramas of our time, a brilliantly clever departure from anything that had gone before. For a long time many of Shaw's plays were not revived because people who did not happen to be Shawians kept on harping on the assertion that they were intended for the study, not for the theatre, which only indicated that these persons did not appreciate Shaw. Fortunately, you never hear that asser-

tion any more. The success of long dialogues like "Misalliance" and "Getting Married" has indicated that Shaw has, before all else, an instinct for the theatre. Everything written by him acquires richer values when placed upon the stage.

**The Local Revival.**

The revival of "Caesar and Cleopatra" was a happy choice for the opening of the New Theatre of the Margaret Eaton School, and the performance proved a most creditable one, even though staged under many difficulties. As is invariably the case when the opening of a playhouse has been announced months in advance, it became a race against time at the last moment. It was not possible to get the scenery placed and painted until within forty-eight hours of the opening. Only fairly veteran organizations like the Players Club, under the guidance of the never-flustered Mr. Forsyth could have done it.

In the Forbes-Robertson production, the settings were altogether realistic. They were handsome and heavy—so heavy in fact that the actor-manager found it cheaper to burn them on a beach in California rather than cart them all the way back to England. He had to destroy them because they were in the United States only on sufferance—in other words, in bond. He tells in his memoirs how sad the fate of the little Sphinx made them all feel. As "Caesar and Cleopatra" is a play of ideas and brilliant characterization, it can exist without spectacle to make it palatable. At the New Theatre, it was played



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against simple backgrounds which Mr. P. A. Deacon designed, not realistically, but with sufficient line to suggest the surroundings. This arrangement, with the colorful apparel of the ancients, proved effective, and aided by the lighting very beautiful at times. It is the only way to do spectacle in miniature.

There was some remarkably shrewd casting in the play, especially in the leading roles. Miss Florence McGee got her first big opportunity as the girl Cleopatra, and she rose to it magnificently. All her work was good, but there were moments that could not have been better. Like her Impish glee when she discovered her right, as queen, to beat her subjects. In more difficult scenes, she also indicated her emotions vividly, as when she crouched trembling before the Sphinx in the presence of a Roman and when she realized that her guilt for the murder of Pothinus was to be discovered, in the scene on the roof of the palace.

Mr. Ivor Lewis, who has been so often associated with debilitated roles, did one of the finest characterizations of his career as Shaw's mellow and philosophic Caesar. There was a twinkle of humor in Mr. Lewis' playing that he has never before had an opportunity to exhibit, but he also made evident

the power and the essential loneliness of the man. Mr. Brendon Mulholland has not done anything as fine as the loyal, direct and stupid soldier, Rufio, and Mr. G. E. Patton got just the right amount of satire into the "art for art's sake" gentleman, Apollodorus. Of course, Mr. H. E. Hitchman could not go wrong with Britannus—the night have been written for him. Mrs. Frances Rostance was a splendidly compelling Ptolemy. In the smaller roles, Mr. George Clark, the boy

who played Ptolemy and Mr. William Atkinson as Pothinus stood out exactly right. Off-hand one cannot recall having seen a non-professional performance that contained more good acting. That fact made the first week at the New Theatre memorable, even to those who found the backgrounds a trifle sketchy.

#### Prophetic Speeches.

In this drama, Bernard Shaw had given several examples of his ability to write moving prose, so evident in "Saint Joan". The apostrophe to the Sphinx is one of them, and the present writer was impressed once again by Caesar's speech after the murder of Pothinus. It applies so perfectly to the discussions that have gone on since the war concerning punishments and reparations that it seems prophetic. Cleopatra has justified the

murder of Pothinus because he was an enemy who would have injured her if left alive. She defies Caesar to find one person to blame her.

To which Caesar replies: "If one man in all the world can be found, now or forever, to know that you did wrong, that man will have either to conquer the world as I have, or be crucified by it. Do you hear? The knockers at your gate are also believers in vengeance and in stabbing. You have slain their leader; it is right that they shall slay you. And then in the name of that right, shall I not slay them for murdering their Queen, and be slain in my turn by their countrymen as the invader of their fatherland?" Can

Rome do less than slay these slayers, too, to shew the world how Rome avenges her sons and her honor. And so to the end of history, murder will breed murder, always in the name of right and honor and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a new race that can understand."

In Shaw's notes on the play you will find another paragraph that might have been written ten years after the war instead of ten years before. He contends that Cleopatra was probably an ill-educated and superstitious girl, judging from her father and her up-bringing. Then he makes the admission: "It is true that the ordinary, well-educated Alexandrian girl of her time would no more have believed bogey stories about the Romans than the daughter of a modern Oxford professor would believe them about the Germans (although, by the way, it is possible to talk great nonsense at Oxford about foreigners, when we are at war with them)."

from M. Johnson's diaries, v. 20, 1925  
(Can. Hist. Dept. MTLB)

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